

Chicago Department on Aging
White House Conference on Aging Post-Event Summary Report
May 10, 2005
McCormick Place in Chicago, Illinois

The Chicago Department on Aging hosts an annual Citywide Senior Conference to address the concerns of older adults and provide a forum for education on topics of interest to seniors. This year's conference, held at McCormick Place on May 10, 2005 was also designated a White House Conference on Aging event, (attachment A). **The attendance included 1,240 older adults.** The following report captures feedback from the senior citizen attendees.

We afforded the seniors three opportunities to offer their feedback. First we distributed a one-paged self-administered survey on health care issues presented in both English and Spanish, (attachment B). The survey described 12 possible issues, and asked respondents to comment on what barriers they encountered and what solutions they could offer for resolving their issues. Respondents could also write in topics of concern for them as well. The initial topics were derived from feedback from informal conversations of 20 Renaissance Court Senior Center members - by asking what health care issues were most important to them.

We asked respondents to choose their top three health care issues and offer written comments. Of the 1,240 surveys distributed, 923 were returned with responses. A total of 567 were returned completed correctly, and 367 added written comments. These were used as a representative sample.

HEALTH CARE AND LONG TERM LIVING SURVEY RESULTS <i>Note: respondents selected their top 3 health care concerns.</i>	total # of responses	% of respondents
Reduce the increasing cost of health care	373	65.8%
Securing SS and Medicare Trust Funds for future	189	33.3%
Affordable Health and long term care insurance	185	32.6%
Investigate ways for the insurance & health care industries to reduce consumer costs	136	24.0%
Improving quality of care in hospitals and nursing homes	131	23.1%
Encourage support & funding of affordable housing to provide continuum of care	126	22.2%
Make prescription drug programs more inclusive and easier to use and understand	126	22.2%
Research Alzheimer's Disease	118	20.8%
Training all healthcare workers to better deal with the elderly	109	19.2%
Exploring alternatives to drug treatment to alleviate pain and treat disease	95	16.8%
Preventing elder abuse	57	10.0%
Integrating wellness and fitness into health care	40	7.0%
Other	16	.9%
TOTAL # OF RESPONDENTS = 567	1701	

The most crucial health care concern is the *Increasing Health Care Costs*, followed by another financial issue: *Securing Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds for the Future*. The third most frequently named concern mirrors these same issues: *Affordable Health and Long Term Care Insurance*.

The attendees had two more opportunities to offer direct feedback at two of conference sessions:

“Latino Seniors Speak Out: A Town Hall Meeting,” and “Good Neighbor/Good Friend.” We tape recorded these sessions. During the question and answer portion at the end of the sessions seniors were prompted to discuss issues on the topics covered in the session, to tell us about the barriers that keep their needs from being met and what solutions would improve the situation.

Their responses, along with the written responses derived from the survey, are reflected the survey results and additional feedback. Chicago Department on Aging staff consolidated the information which is presented in the following charts.

Issues and Recommendations Produced by Seniors

High Cost of Medical Services and Health Care	
Barriers	Solutions
Cost of medicine and medical insurance are too high	Federal government and administration should prioritize the medical needs of seniors and create policy to reduce cost of health insurance, medical care and long-term care.
High medical costs make people unable to pay their bills	Provide free national healthcare and create free community health clinics.
	Educate people on getting the most out of their insurance through Town Hall and other community meetings.
	Increase employment opportunities for seniors to make them more capable of affording health care.
	Tap lottery dollars, property taxes, private companies and other non-traditional resources to expense health care.
	Use more skilled medical professionals.
	Create preventive medical programs for seniors.

Quality Medical Care	
Barriers	Solutions
Health care is short staffed; there are not enough nurses, doctors or health care workers	Educate more high school, college and medical students in caring for seniors.
	Hire more nurses.
Doctors are not trained in working with seniors and many times avoid giving full explanations of illnesses due to a preconception that seniors will not be able to understand	Increase the number of geriatric specialists and train general medical practitioners on senior care.
Seniors have to endure long waits for appointments as well as long waits in emergency rooms and doctors' offices	Give seniors priority in scheduling appointments and visiting doctors' offices.
	Extend referrals so that they are good for a longer period of time.
Medical practitioners are more concerned with policy than human life	Cut some of the “red tape” when treating seniors.
Medical staff is unmotivated and not caring	Train medical staff on senior treatment by developing their communication, listening and caring skills.

	Link doctors' pay to the positive outcomes of their patients.
	Place part-time seniors on healthcare boards.
	Provide more phone access to doctors.
Difficulty finding doctors who provide quality care	Create an internet service that would inform seniors of doctors' specialty and background information in order for them to make an informed decisions.
Seniors' healthcare coverage changes each time they move out of the state	Provide nationwide health care coverage.
Foreign language speakers cannot relate to doctors and medical practitioners	Make bilingual doctors accessible to bilingual and foreign language speakers.
Health insurance limitations on which doctors can be seen and which hospitals can be visited	Increase the number of doctors and hospitals that can be used for services
Foreign language residents cannot read prescription directions	Create medical and prescription information in other languages

Affordable Housing and Community

Barriers	Solutions
Lack of affordable housing	Increase funding for affordable housing for seniors.
	Increase funding to help pay seniors' utilities.
	Create more subsidized senior homes.
	Develop 2-bedroom housing for seniors.
Lack of safety in senior buildings and in areas where seniors live	Provide better security (lights, doorman) for senior buildings and establish stricter safety measures in communities with a large number of seniors.
Lack of socialization among seniors	Create centers where seniors can take classes & socialize.
Homeless seniors receive little aid from government	Create more support for homeless seniors.
Foreign professionals find no work in the United States	Create programs that assist foreign professionals in their transition to professional positions in the US
Senior housing facilities lack bilingual staff	Ensure that all senior housing facilities can serve all languages of its residents
Many seniors are raising their grandchildren	Place as a priority the needs of Grandparents raising Grandchildren.
	Provide housing for Grandparents raising their Grandchildren.

High Cost of Prescription Drugs

Barriers	Solutions
The high and rising costs of prescription drugs make them unaffordable	Lower co-pay for people 70 years and older.
	Enforce price controls by setting a maximum price for drugs.
	Make foreign drugs available.
	Provide free medication for seniors.
	Limit large profits by drug companies.

	Create a sliding fee scale.
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Understanding Medicare and Social Security	
Barriers	Solutions
Medicare and Social Security are very complicated and difficult to understand	Educate seniors on Medicare and Social Security.
	Simplify Medicare.
	Make forms and information easier to understand.
	Allow low to moderate income seniors write the descriptions for drug/prescription programs. Use more pictures and graphics when explaining government programs.
Prescription writing on medicine containers is too small	Print prescription information in a larger font.

Research Alternative Medication	
Barriers	Solutions
Lack of information about alternative medications and treatment	Provide more information on alternative medications and treatment. Create a plan to educate on alternative medication options.
Overemphasis on prescription drugs	Promote research on alternative treatment.
Insufficient research on alternative treatments	Place a greater emphasis on healthy living rather than drugs.
	Encourage the use of Park Districts for exercise.

Low-Income Seniors	
Barriers	Solutions
Many seniors have insufficient income to pay their living and health expenses	The government should increase Social Security Income and pension.
	Allow property tax breaks for mid-income seniors.
	Make medicine affordable.
	Make food stamps available to all low-income seniors.
	Prayer

Home Care	
Barriers	Solutions
Seniors need dedicated caregivers in their homes	The government should pay family members to be the primary caregivers of seniors.
	Provide adequate in-home care outside of assisted-living facilities.
Lack of integrated services for seniors (i.e. housing, Meals on Wheels, transportation, etc)	Provide better case management coordination.
Prepared meals are expensive and grocery shopping is a hassle due to one's need to stand in long lines	Provide nutritional meals for seniors regardless of income.

Improve General Benefits	
Barriers	Solutions
V.A does not accept Medicare	Allow V.A. to accept Medicare.
Dental Care is expensive	Create affordable dental care or include dental in Medicare.

Elder Abuse	
Barriers	Solutions
People take advantage of seniors	Educate seniors of different types of fraud including physician and financial fraud.
Nursing Home residents many times are not served nutritious meals	Provide closer monitoring of nursing homes.
	Hire employees who care for elderly and are correctly trained.

Transportation	
Barriers	Solutions
Many seniors do not drive and therefore do not have transportation to medical and recreational appointments	Provide transportation from home to medical appointments.
	Make sure that public transportation is sufficient, especially in neighborhoods with a large number of seniors.
	Provide coupons for using taxis service and public transportation.

Mental Health	
Barriers	Solutions
Lack of services for the emotional needs of seniors	Provide bereavement counseling to help people cope with loss.
	Provide general counseling for seniors.
	Increase the number of case managers who work with seniors.

Report submitted by: Chicago Department on Aging, 30 N. La Salle St., Suite 2320, Chicago, IL 60602 (312) 744-4016

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WHCoA Report (Attachment A)

CHICAGO DEPARTMENT ON AGING
Presents
2005 CITYWIDE SENIOR CONFERENCE
CELEBRATE LIVING: REAL SOLUTIONS FOR REAL LIFE
Tuesday, May 10, 2005
10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

McCormick Place - Lakeside Center
2301 South Lake Shore Drive
Room 354b

Richard M. Daley
Mayor
City of Chicago

Joyce Gallagher
Commissioner
Chicago Department on Aging

Page One
Greetings from the Mayor

Page Two
Welcome from the Commissioner

Conference Program

- 10:30 a.m. Plenary Session (Sesion Plenaria)
- Presentation of Colors
 Chicago Military Academy at Bronzeville
- National Anthem
 Sarah Gorecki, Soloist
- Welcome (Bienvenida & Introduccion)
 Joyce Gallagher, Commissioner
 Chicago Department on Aging
- Kerry R. Peck, Managing Partner
 Peck, Bloom, Austriaco & Mitchell, LLC
- 11:15 a.m. Invocation (Invocacion)
 Dr. Mildred Harris, God First Ministries
- Luncheon (Almuerzo)
- Entertainment (Entertenimiento)
 Sark Antaramian & The Midnight Express
- 12:30 - 3:45 p.m. Resource Fair (Feria de Recursos)
- 1:00 - 3:45 p.m. Workshops (Talleres)
- 4:00 p.m. Departure (Salida)

Pages 4, 5 & 6
Workshop Descriptions

1:00PM - 1:45 PM (English) - Room E350

Keeping Up with Medicare Changes

In 2006 all Medicare beneficiaries will need to make a decision on the new Medicare Part D prescription drug plan. This workshop will educate seniors on the changes taking place, the costs and the coverage, and how seniors can apply for subsidies to help pay for their Part D premiums.

Presented by: Bryan Padgett
Illinois Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP)

1:00PM - 1:45 PM (Spanish) - Room E351

Latino Seniors Speak Out: A Town Hall Meeting

This Town Hall format will create a supportive and comfortable environment where Latino seniors can comment, raise public awareness, help resolve issues, share their concerns and speak on the joys and the challenges faced when attempting to access senior services.

Ancianos Latinos a Voz Alta - Una Reunion Comunitaria

Esta reunion comunitaria creara un ambiente comfortable de apoyo en el cual ancianos puedan compartir sus preocupaciones, hablar de situaciones buenas o malas y resolverlas en las cuales se encuentren cuando intentan usar servicios dirigidos a ancianos.

Presented by: Radio Personality Caren Ex, MA, LCSW
from "Carina: Su Mejor Amiga"
WRTO 1200 AM

1:00PM - 1:45 PM (English) - Room E352

Arthritis Pain: What Can I Do About It

Osteoarthritis may be a debilitating and painful condition for many. There may be limitations in the activities of daily living. In this presentation many treatment options will be explored, including injection therapy, nerve blocks and medications as a means for pain control. Time will be given to the audience to ask questions pertaining to their individual conditions.

Presented by: Dr. Alexandra Popescu, Rheumatologist
Belmar Physicians Group

2:00 PM - 2:45 PM (Spanish) - Room E350

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Manteniendose al Tanto Con Los Cambios de Medicare

En el 2006, todos los beneficiarios de Medicare tendran que hacer una decision en el Nuevo Plan D de recetas de Medicare. Este taller mostrara a los seniors los cambios que se han hecho en los costos y la cobertura y como podran solicitar los subsidios que les ayudaran a pagar por los pagos que les corresponde en la Parte D.

Presented by: Nicolas Rodriquez

Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)

2:00PM - 2:45 PM (English) - Room E351

Good Neighbor/Good Friend

It takes a village to promote vibrant living among independent seniors in our communities. This panel discussion will demonstrate how communities can work together to protect its senior residents. Find out how the Chicago Department on Aging is ensuring that seniors remain healthy and safe in their community.

Moderator: Marion Bond, Educational Therapist
Southside Ecumenical Consortium of Wellness for the Elderly
Chicago Department on Aging Advisory Council Member

Presented by: Jaime Hersh-White, MSW - Caregiver Initiative
Chicago Department on Aging

Sgt. Jeff Hoffmann, Senior Services Program
Chicago Police Department

Angela Griffin, Senior Companion Program Director
Chicago Department on Aging

2:00PM - 2:45 PM (English) - Room E352

Step Up to Better Health

Our bodies are made to move, and being physically active for at least 30 minutes a day, five or more days a week can make a positive difference in your life. Learn how to schedule at least 30 minutes of physical activity into your everyday routine and tailor your activities to fit your lifestyle.

Presented by: Terri Worman, Community Organizer
AARP

3:00PM - 3:45 PM (English) - Room E350

Making the Senior Housing Connection

The Chicago Department of Housing will host a workshop on the housing resources available for seniors. This workshop will include practical information on accessing Emergency Heat Assistance Program (EHAP), Home Repair for Accessible and Independent Living (HRAIL), Multifamily Rentals for Seniors, foreclosure prevention and much more.

Presented by: Sherry Rontos
Chicago Department of Housing

3:00PM - 3:45 PM (English) - Room E351

Investing Your Time In Your Community

Becoming a volunteer is more than just a way to pass a few hours. To many volunteers it is a way to connect with people in their community, support organizations, and to use the skills they have developed over a lifetime. Two such organizations, The People's Music School and RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) of Hull House recruit and utilize volunteers in innovative and productive ways.

Presented by: Mary Ellen McGarry, Executive Director
The People's Music School

Beverly Barr, Director of Volunteers
RSVP of Hull House

3:00PM - 3:45 PM (English) - Room E352

Shortness of Breath: What You Should Know

Many lung diseases present with shortness of breath. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) is one of the most common, most threatening and least recognized. Come and learn about the signs, symptoms, treatments and prevention methods for COPD and the exciting initiative the American Lung Association of Metropolitan Chicago is undertaking to fight this disease.

Presented by: Rhonda Williams, MES
and
Andrea Martin, MD
American Lung Association

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Additional Financial Support

Chicago White Sox
Illinois' Senior Health Insurance Program (SHIP)

**Chicago Department on Aging
2005 Staff Planning Committee**

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Julie A. Degnan, Deputy Commissioner
Robin Tillotson, Director, Southeast Senior Center
Karen Zboril, Director, Southwest Senior Center
Paula Basta, Director, Northeast (Levy) Senior Center
Merrie Star, Director, Northwest (Copernicus) Senior Center
Patricia Stovall, Director, Central West Senior Center
Patricia O'Malley, Director, Renaissance Court - Cultural Center
Katy Truckly, Life Enrichment Programs
Diana Escobar, Life Enrichment Programs
Pam Pagone, Staff Assistant
Dawn Hughes, Staff Assistant

WHCoA Report (Attachment B)

Health Care and Long Term Living Survey

We would like your opinion on what Health Care issues you think the Federal Government should make their top priority in the coming years. Your recommendations will be forwarded to the White House Conference on Aging program committee for consideration at the White House Conference on Aging event scheduled for Autumn 2005. Thank you.

PLEASE READ THEM ALL AND THEN CHECK YOUR TOP THREE ISSUES:

- ☐ Reducing the increasing cost of health care.
- ☐ Making the Prescription Drug programs more inclusive and easier to use and understand.
- ☐ Exploring alternatives to drug treatment to alleviate pain and treat disease.
- ☐ Affordable health and long term care insurance.
- ☐ Training all health care workers to better deal with the elderly.
- ☐ Investigate ways for the insurance and health care industries to reduce consumer costs.
- ☐ Improving the quality of care in hospitals and nursing homes.
- ☐ Preventing elder abuse.
- ☐ Continuing to research Alzheimer's Disease.
- ☐ Securing the Medicare and Social Security Trust Fund for future generations.
- ☐ Integrating wellness and fitness more fully into health care.
- ☐ Encourage support and funding of affordable housing to provide continuum of care options so people can stay in their own homes.
- ☐ Other Health Care Issues: _____

What are the barriers that keep your health care needs from being met?

What solutions would you recommend?